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Espionage Panel Chief Tells of Talks With Agent

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WASHINGTON, Nov. 21 — The chairman of a Pentagon commission on security said today that he had discussed Soviet espionage techniques with a Soviet intelligence officer who said he was defecting but later returned to Moscow.

Gen. Richard Stilwell, the commission chairman, said the officer, Vitaly Yurchenko, confirmed several assessments made by American intelligence officials. Sources familiar with the discussion said that Mr. Yurchenko, a former officer in K.G.B., the Soviet intelligence agency, told General Stilwell that most of the Americans who spied for the Soviet Union were volunteers, not recruits.

The commission today announced its recommendations for a broad array of changes in the military's security procedures. General Stilwell discussed the proposals with reporters and later in an interview. He said the continuing uncertainty over whether Mr. Yurchenko was a Soviet plant or a defector who changed his mind would not affect the commission's conclusions.

Weinberger Orders Steps

The meeting between Mr. Yurchenko and the chairman of a high-level commission to review security procedures was further evidence of the extent to which senior Administration officials had been convinced that Mr. Yurchenko was a defector. Mr. Yurchenko defected in August but later asserted that he had been drugged and kidnapped by the Central Intelligence Agency. The agency denied it.

Some Administration officials have since said that Mr. Yurchenko might have been a Soviet plant. General Stilwell, the former Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Policy, said he believed Mr. Yurchenko's defection had been genuine.

The report on security has been received by Defense Secretary Caspar W. Weinberger who will decide which recommendations to adopt. Several require Congressional action. Mr. Weinberger has already ordered all military commanders to conduct a "top to bottom" inspection of security practices and make a report by Oct. 1, 1986.

Lie Detector Tests Urged

The commission recommended that the three million people with clearances to handle "secret" material be subject to random polygraph, or lie-detector, tests. It called for stiffer penalties for security lapses by military contractors; travel restrictions on Eastern bloc diplomats assigned to the United Nations and rewards for people who turn in spies.

The proposal for expanded use of polygraph tests is likely to face opposition in Congress where some legislators have questioned their validity.

The commission was appointed to study the lessons learned from several recent spy cases, including the 17-year espionage career of John A. Walker Jr., a retired Navy officer who has admitted spying for the Soviet Union.

The commission said that while the damage caused to the military by security breaches had been relatively small, some spying had been "gravely damaging." The report, which makes 63 separate recommendations, acknowledged that the Pentagon has failed to follow existing rules.

"Security regulations are often violated," it said, "but only serious cases are typically made a matter of report; few of those are investigated, even where a pattern of such conduct is in evidence; and fewer still result in punishment."

The report recommends that the Pentagon begin enforcing a policy that requires investigations every five years of those who hold "top secret" clearances.

Additionally, the commission said the Defense Department investigators who do the reinvestigations should have access to both Federal criminal records and "to other automated data banks of the Federal government which contain information of potential security significance."

In the past several years, several active or retired members of the military or employees of civilian defense contractors have been accused of volunteering to spy for the Soviet Union. According to the authorities, Arthur Walker told them his brother John A. Walker Jr. contacted the Soviets in the mid-1960's. Christopher John Boyce and Andrew Daulton Lee.

The commission's report calls for increased research to try to develop tests to determine characteristics of people compelled to seek or reveal secret information.